



MAY 03 2010

The Honorable Nancy Sutley
Chair, Council on Environmental Quality and
Co-Chair of the Federal Bay-Delta Leadership Committee
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Ms. Sutley:

This letter to you and other members of the Federal Bay-Delta Leadership Committee describes a joint initiative being undertaken by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) relating to the California Bay-Delta. The initiative grows out of the March 19, 2010, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled, "A Scientific Assessment of Alternatives for Reducing Water Management Effects on Threatened and Endangered Fishes in California's Bay Delta" (NAS Report), as well as two independent scientific reviews of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) program conducted in 2008 and 2009.¹ Implementation of this initiative will involve close coordination among Federal agencies, as well as with the State of California, which has agreed to participate in the process.

This initiative is an aggressive inter-agency plan for developing a single integrated Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the California Bay-Delta and related water operations of the Federal Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project. The initiative has a two-fold strategy that includes: (1) near-term development and analysis of additional science that will address issues raised by NAS with regard to the current Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) BiOps on water project operations with the goal of incorporating the new science into the process for implementing the BiOps in water year 2011 (Near-Term Science Strategy); and (2) development of a single, integrated BiOp based on a joint science program that encompasses FWS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), NMFS and State scientists, and which will address the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and water project operations (Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy).

Specific components and milestones of this plan include the following:

1. Establishment of a joint DOI/DOC Task Force that is based in the region, and that also includes participation from headquarters. The Task Force will be established no later than May 7, 2010. Designated points of contact for the Task Force are Mr. David Nawi, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, and Ms. Monica Medina, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of Commerce.

¹ These reports are entitled "Listen to the River: An Independent Review of the CVPIA Fisheries Program" (December 2008), and "Undelivered Water: Fulfilling the CVPIA Promise To Central Valley Refuges" (November 2009).

2. The Task Force will target issues in the current FWS and NMFS BiOps that were identified by the NAS Report as appropriate for further near-term scientific research, including data-gathering, modeling, monitoring, and sampling. The focus will be on issues such as the triggers for water management constraints and potential adaptive management actions that could affect such constraints and triggers. The initial list of near-term issues will be completed no later than May 30, 2010. This Near-Term Science Strategy is intended to provide information to support decisions regarding implementation of the BiOps in water year 2011, and it will feed into and be a component of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
3. Consistent with the existing BiOps, NMFS, FWS and BOR will undertake an Integrated Annual Review of the BiOps in November 2010. The Agencies will work with the Delta Science Program to facilitate this effort. The review will focus on the prior year's real-time water operations decisions and real-time species information underlying those decisions, with the goal of developing lessons learned, incorporating new science, and making appropriate scientifically justified adjustments to support the 2011 real-time decision making.
4. The Task Force will develop an initial draft Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy by May 30, 2010. This draft strategy will identify analytical methods and modeling tools that will be utilized in the BDCP /BiOp process, any critical gaps in needed tools that should receive priority attention for development (e.g., new life cycle models), an expedited approach for filling those gaps, and an approach for conducting independent peer review at various milestones in the BDCP process. The draft document will be made available to individual scientific experts outside DOI and DOC, including members of the NAS panel, for review and comment before being finalized. The Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy will culminate in development of a joint FWS/NMFS integrated BiOp for the BDCP. Formal consultation for that integrated BiOp will commence upon submission to FWS and NMFS of a legally adequate Biological Assessment for the BDCP, which will occur in connection with review of the draft BDCP. The integrated BiOp will be issued upon completion of the BDCP and its final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report that is currently expected to occur in early 2012.
5. The Task Force will develop a funding plan to support implementation of the Near-Term Science Strategy and the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy. The funding plan will set forth those actions for which funds have been identified, as well as those for which no funds have yet been identified. The funding plan will include a plan by BuRec BOR to utilize CVPIA restoration funding to support implementation of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
6. The Task Force will meet with scientists in other Federal agencies, State agencies, and other scientists to (1) ensure that the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy complements and is coordinated with related scientific actions undertaken by other entities; and (2) encourage other entities to undertake scientific actions that support and enhance the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.

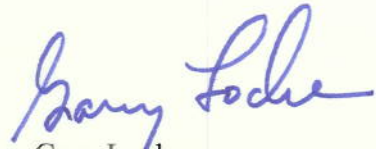
A high priority for the Near-Term Science Strategy is to improve the scientific underpinning of the triggers within the adaptive range of existing actions in the BiOps that affect water supply deliveries. If new scientific information is developed that meets the criteria for reinitiation of consultation and possible alteration of one or both of the current BiOps, consultation will be reinitiated if necessary to incorporate that new science. Full advantage will be taken of the extent to which the existing BiOps permit adaptive management and incorporation of new science.

We look forward to coordinating closely with you in the coming months as we work to implement this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce



MAY 03 2010

The Honorable John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This letter to you and other members of the Federal Bay-Delta Leadership Committee describes a joint initiative being undertaken by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) relating to the California Bay-Delta. The initiative grows out of the March 19, 2010, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled, "A Scientific Assessment of Alternatives for Reducing Water Management Effects on Threatened and Endangered Fishes in California's Bay Delta" (NAS Report), as well as two independent scientific reviews of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) program conducted in 2008 and 2009.¹ Implementation of this initiative will involve close coordination among Federal agencies, as well as with the State of California, which has agreed to participate in the process.

This initiative is an aggressive inter-agency plan for developing a single integrated Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the California Bay-Delta and related water operations of the Federal Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project. The initiative has a two-fold strategy that includes: (1) near-term development and analysis of additional science that will address issues raised by NAS with regard to the current Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) BiOps on water project operations with the goal of incorporating the new science into the process for implementing the BiOps in water year 2011 (Near-Term Science Strategy); and (2) development of a single, integrated BiOp based on a joint science program that encompasses FWS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), NMFS and State scientists, and which will address the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and water project operations (Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy).

Specific components and milestones of this plan include the following:

1. Establishment of a joint DOI/DOC Task Force that is based in the region, and that also includes participation from headquarters. The Task Force will be established no later than May 7, 2010. Designated points of contact for the Task Force are Mr. David Nawi, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, and Ms. Monica Medina, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of Commerce.

¹ These reports are entitled "Listen to the River: An Independent Review of the CVPIA Fisheries Program" (December 2008), and "Undelivered Water: Fulfilling the CVPIA Promise To Central Valley Refuges" (November 2009).

2. The Task Force will target issues in the current FWS and NMFS BiOps that were identified by the NAS Report as appropriate for further near-term scientific research, including data-gathering, modeling, monitoring, and sampling. The focus will be on issues such as the triggers for water management constraints and potential adaptive management actions that could affect such constraints and triggers. The initial list of near-term issues will be completed no later than May 30, 2010. This Near-Term Science Strategy is intended to provide information to support decisions regarding implementation of the BiOps in water year 2011, and it will feed into and be a component of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
3. Consistent with the existing BiOps, NMFS, FWS and BOR will undertake an Integrated Annual Review of the BiOps in November 2010. The Agencies will work with the Delta Science Program to facilitate this effort. The review will focus on the prior year's real-time water operations decisions and real-time species information underlying those decisions, with the goal of developing lessons learned, incorporating new science, and making appropriate scientifically justified adjustments to support the 2011 real-time decision making.
4. The Task Force will develop an initial draft Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy by May 30, 2010. This draft strategy will identify analytical methods and modeling tools that will be utilized in the BDCP BiOp process, any critical gaps in needed tools that should receive priority attention for development (e.g., new life cycle models), an expedited approach for filling those gaps, and an approach for conducting independent peer review at various milestones in the BDCP process. The draft document will be made available to individual scientific experts outside DOI and DOC, including members of the NAS panel, for review and comment before being finalized. The Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy will culminate in development of a joint FWS/NMFS integrated BiOp for the BDCP. Formal consultation for that integrated BiOp will commence upon submission to FWS and NMFS of a legally adequate Biological Assessment for the BDCP, which will occur in connection with review of the draft BDCP. The integrated BiOp will be issued upon completion of the BDCP and its final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report that is currently expected to occur in early 2012.
5. The Task Force will develop a funding plan to support implementation of the Near-Term Science Strategy and the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy. The funding plan will set forth those actions for which funds have been identified, as well as those for which no funds have yet been identified. The funding plan will include a plan by BOR to utilize CVPIA restoration funding to support implementation of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
6. The Task Force will meet with scientists in other Federal agencies, State agencies, and other scientists to (1) ensure that the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy complements and is coordinated with related scientific actions undertaken by other entities; and (2) encourage other entities to undertake scientific actions that support and enhance the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.

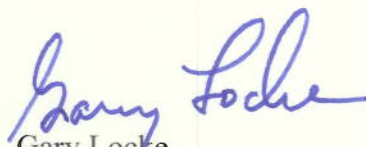
A high priority for the Near-Term Science Strategy is to improve the scientific underpinning of the triggers within the adaptive range of existing actions in the BiOps that affect water supply deliveries. If new scientific information is developed that meets the criteria for reinitiation of consultation and possible alteration of one or both of the current BiOps, consultation will be reinitiated if necessary to incorporate that new science. Full advantage will be taken of the extent to which the existing BiOps permit adaptive management and incorporation of new science.

We look forward to coordinating closely with you in the coming months as we work to implement this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce



MAY 03 2010

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

This letter to you and other members of the Federal Bay-Delta Leadership Committee describes a joint initiative being undertaken by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) relating to the California Bay-Delta. The initiative grows out of the March 19, 2010, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled, "A Scientific Assessment of Alternatives for Reducing Water Management Effects on Threatened and Endangered Fishes in California's Bay Delta" (NAS Report), as well as two independent scientific reviews of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) program conducted in 2008 and 2009.¹ Implementation of this initiative will involve close coordination among Federal agencies, as well as with the State of California, which has agreed to participate in the process.

This initiative is an aggressive inter-agency plan for developing a single integrated Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the California Bay-Delta and related water operations of the Federal Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project. The initiative has a two-fold strategy that includes: (1) near-term development and analysis of additional science that will address issues raised by NAS with regard to the current Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) BiOps on water project operations with the goal of incorporating the new science into the process for implementing the BiOps in water year 2011 (Near-Term Science Strategy); and (2) development of a single, integrated BiOp based on a joint science program that encompasses FWS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), NMFS and State scientists, and which will address the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and water project operations (Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy).

Specific components and milestones of this plan include the following:

1. Establishment of a joint DOI/DOC Task Force that is based in the region, and that also includes participation from headquarters. The Task Force will be established no later than May 7, 2010. Designated points of contact for the Task Force are Mr. David Nawi, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, and Ms. Monica Medina, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of Commerce.

¹ These reports are entitled "Listen to the River: An Independent Review of the CVPIA Fisheries Program" (December 2008), and "Undelivered Water: Fulfilling the CVPIA Promise To Central Valley Refuges" (November 2009).

2. The Task Force will target issues in the current FWS and NMFS BiOps that were identified by the NAS Report as appropriate for further near-term scientific research, including data-gathering, modeling, monitoring, and sampling. The focus will be on issues such as the triggers for water management constraints and potential adaptive management actions that could affect such constraints and triggers. The initial list of near-term issues will be completed no later than May 30, 2010. This Near-Term Science Strategy is intended to provide information to support decisions regarding implementation of the BiOps in water year 2011, and it will feed into and be a component of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
3. Consistent with the existing BiOps, NMFS, FWS and BOR will undertake an Integrated Annual Review of the BiOps in November 2010. The Agencies will work with the Delta Science Program to facilitate this effort. The review will focus on the prior year's real-time water operations decisions and real-time species information underlying those decisions, with the goal of developing lessons learned, incorporating new science, and making appropriate scientifically justified adjustments to support the 2011 real-time decision making.
4. The Task Force will develop an initial draft Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy by May 30, 2010. This draft strategy will identify analytical methods and modeling tools that will be utilized in the BDCP BiOp process, any critical gaps in needed tools that should receive priority attention for development (e.g., new life cycle models), an expedited approach for filling those gaps, and an approach for conducting independent peer review at various milestones in the BDCP process. The draft document will be made available to individual scientific experts outside DOI and DOC, including members of the NAS panel, for review and comment before being finalized. The Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy will culminate in development of a joint FWS/NMFS integrated BiOp for the BDCP. Formal consultation for that integrated BiOp will commence upon submission to FWS and NMFS of a legally adequate Biological Assessment for the BDCP, which will occur in connection with review of the draft BDCP. The integrated BiOp will be issued upon completion of the BDCP and its final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report that is currently expected to occur in early 2012.
5. The Task Force will develop a funding plan to support implementation of the Near-Term Science Strategy and the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy. The funding plan will set forth those actions for which funds have been identified, as well as those for which no funds have yet been identified. The funding plan will include a plan by BOR to utilize CVPIA restoration funding to support implementation of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
6. The Task Force will meet with scientists in other Federal agencies, State agencies, and other scientists to (1) ensure that the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy complements and is coordinated with related scientific actions undertaken by other entities; and (2) encourage other entities to undertake scientific actions that support and enhance the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.

A high priority for the Near-Term Science Strategy is to improve the scientific underpinning of the triggers within the adaptive range of existing actions in the BiOps that affect water supply deliveries. If new scientific information is developed that meets the criteria for reinitiation of consultation and possible alteration of one or both of the current BiOps, consultation will be reinitiated if necessary to incorporate that new science. Full advantage will be taken of the extent to which the existing BiOps permit adaptive management and incorporation of new science.

We look forward to coordinating closely with you in the coming months as we work to implement this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce



MAY 03 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This letter to you and other members of the Federal Bay-Delta Leadership Committee describes a joint initiative being undertaken by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) relating to the California Bay-Delta. The initiative grows out of the March 19, 2010, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled, "A Scientific Assessment of Alternatives for Reducing Water Management Effects on Threatened and Endangered Fishes in California's Bay Delta" (NAS Report), as well as two independent scientific reviews of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) program conducted in 2008 and 2009.¹ Implementation of this initiative will involve close coordination among Federal agencies, as well as with the State of California, which has agreed to participate in the process.

This initiative is an aggressive inter-agency plan for developing a single integrated Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the California Bay-Delta and related water operations of the Federal Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project. The initiative has a two-fold strategy that includes: (1) near-term development and analysis of additional science that will address issues raised by NAS with regard to the current Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) BiOps on water project operations with the goal of incorporating the new science into the process for implementing the BiOps in water year 2011 (Near-Term Science Strategy); and (2) development of a single, integrated BiOp based on a joint science program that encompasses FWS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), NMFS and State scientists, and which will address the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and water project operations (Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy).

Specific components and milestones of this plan include the following:

1. Establishment of a joint DOI/DOC Task Force that is based in the region, and that also includes participation from headquarters. The Task Force will be established no later than May 7, 2010. Designated points of contact for the Task Force are Mr. David Nawi, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, and Ms. Monica Medina, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of Commerce.

¹ These reports are entitled "Listen to the River: An Independent Review of the CVPIA Fisheries Program" (December 2008), and "Undelivered Water: Fulfilling the CVPIA Promise To Central Valley Refuges" (November 2009).

2. The Task Force will target issues in the current FWS and NMFS BiOps that were identified by the NAS Report as appropriate for further near-term scientific research, including data-gathering, modeling, monitoring, and sampling. The focus will be on issues such as the triggers for water management constraints and potential adaptive management actions that could affect such constraints and triggers. The initial list of near-term issues will be completed no later than May 30, 2010. This Near-Term Science Strategy is intended to provide information to support decisions regarding implementation of the BiOps in water year 2011, and it will feed into and be a component of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
3. Consistent with the existing BiOps, NMFS, FWS and BOR will undertake an Integrated Annual Review of the BiOps in November 2010. The Agencies will work with the Delta Science Program to facilitate this effort. The review will focus on the prior year's real-time water operations decisions and real-time species information underlying those decisions, with the goal of developing lessons learned, incorporating new science, and making appropriate scientifically justified adjustments to support the 2011 real-time decision making.
4. The Task Force will develop an initial draft Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy by May 30, 2010. This draft strategy will identify analytical methods and modeling tools that will be utilized in the BDCP /BiOp process, any critical gaps in needed tools that should receive priority attention for development (e.g., new life cycle models), an expedited approach for filling those gaps, and an approach for conducting independent peer review at various milestones in the BDCP process. The draft document will be made available to individual scientific experts outside DOI and DOC, including members of the NAS panel, for review and comment before being finalized. The Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy will culminate in development of a joint FWS/NMFS integrated BiOp for the BDCP. Formal consultation for that integrated BiOp will commence upon submission to FWS and NMFS of a legally adequate Biological Assessment for the BDCP, which will occur in connection with review of the draft BDCP. The integrated BiOp will be issued upon completion of the BDCP and its final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report that is currently expected to occur in early 2012.
5. The Task Force will develop a funding plan to support implementation of the Near-Term Science Strategy and the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy. The funding plan will set forth those actions for which funds have been identified, as well as those for which no funds have yet been identified. The funding plan will include a plan by BuRec BOR to utilize CVPIA restoration funding to support implementation of the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.
6. The Task Force will meet with scientists in other Federal agencies, State agencies, and other scientists to (1) ensure that the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy complements and is coordinated with related scientific actions undertaken by other entities; and (2) encourage other entities to undertake scientific actions that support and enhance the Integrated BDCP BiOp Strategy.

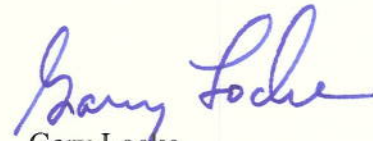
A high priority for the Near-Term Science Strategy is to improve the scientific underpinning of the triggers within the adaptive range of existing actions in the BiOps that affect water supply deliveries. If new scientific information is developed that meets the criteria for reinitiation of consultation and possible alteration of one or both of the current BiOps, consultation will be reinitiated if necessary to incorporate that new science. Full advantage will be taken of the extent to which the existing BiOps permit adaptive management and incorporation of new science.

We look forward to coordinating closely with you in the coming months as we work to implement this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce